Win the Battle of the Bulge: 7 Tips to Increase Self-Control

Losing excess weight and keeping it off can be challenging. In the last lesson, you found tips and techniques to control your hunger. But even easy strategies require some self-control. So this lesson brings you some ways to strengthen your self-control.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), over 69% of American adults are overweight. As you know, being overweight can lead to many dangerous health conditions, such as high blood pressure, stroke, cancer, and heart disease.

Despite the risks, most of us have a hard time resisting the temptation of high calorie foods and other unhealthy lifestyle choices. The good news is that there are several ways to boost your willpower so that you can successfully lose those unwanted pounds!

Try these strategies to increase your self-control and successfully lose weight:

1. **Get plenty of rest.** Resisting the urge to cheat on your diet takes energy. **You're more likely to give in to temptation when you're tired.** Make preparations to get a restful night's sleep and take frequent breaks during the day to boost your willpower.

2. **Identify cravings and make healthy substitutions.** Cravings can be irresistible and derail the most determined dieters. The next time you crave a specific food, satisfy the craving with a healthy substitute.

    - Fresh fruit and vegetables are great alternatives when you're craving calorie-heavy, crunchy chips.

    - **Try adding cinnamon to make foods taste sweeter without adding excess sugar.**

    - Other spices such as garlic, oregano, and basil can add flavor to foods without adding salt.

    - Try broiling or pan searing some of your foods in place of frying them. You'll still get a crunchy outer layer without the use of oil.

3. **Focus on one area of improvement at a time. Our ability to exercise control is like a muscle.** It can be built up, as well as exhausted.

    - For example, if you want to lose weight and quit smoking, you might deplete your reserve of will power if you try to make both of these major changes at the same time.

4. **Practice moderation.** You can more easily strengthen your self-control if you take a moderate approach to dieting and exercise. **Achieve success at weight loss by allowing yourself little indulgences from time to time.**

5. **Celebrate your success.** We have more willpower when we have a clear goal that we're working towards and feel as though our effort will be recognized or rewarded.

    - Divide your overall weight loss goal into several smaller chunks and celebrate as you reach each level.

    - Choose a reward that isn't tied to eating, such as buying a new outfit or going to see a new movie with a loved one.

6. **Share your battle with a friend that will keep you on track.** It's easier to maintain your self-control and stay focused on achieving your weight loss goal when you have a friend to cheer you on and help you stay motivated.

7. **Use affirmations and positive visualization. Regularly visualize yourself at the size you wish to be.** Use self-talk and verbal statements that affirm your ability to control yourself.

Having the discipline to lose weight and keep it off will benefit you immensely. Practicing these strategies can help you to increase your willpower and self-control so you can strengthen your health and win the battle for your waistline!

We're near the end of this course now, with only two lessons left. What will happen when you finish the course? Will you continue to take advantage of the calorie-cutting strategies you learned?

Many times, once someone reaches their target weight, the pounds come back. Don't let this happen to you! In the next lesson, you'll discover the secret to creating a sustainable weight loss mindset.

Here's what you need to do today:

Keep your eye on success! The Additional Resources box for this lesson – and almost every lesson in this course – includes an affirmation to help you affirm your positive weight-loss choices and visualize yourself at your target weight.

Check these resource boxes and download your affirmations. Repeat the ones that resonate with you the most several times today and every day.

Regularly affirming these choices will make it harder for you to choose otherwise, and easier for you to make healthy decisions regarding your food.